

Getting Started in Planning

Packet Synopsis

Getting started in Planning requires that a fundamental decision be made, namely that the community is in need of a current comprehensive plan to guide its future development in a manner that reflects the wishes of the community.

This can simply be the revision and updating of its existing comprehensive plan to reflect and address changing circumstances now facing the community since the adoption of its current plan. Or, in the absence of any planning, the recognition that planning is now needed to guide the future course of the community's development and evolution.

The impetus for this fundamental decision can be an ad hoc group of concerned citizens, a formal planning group or commission or a governing board such as a county board, city council, or town board. The first action required is for the governing body to pass a resolution directing the planning process to proceed and assigning the responsibility to do so.

The following packet items have been selected to help communities identify the essential elements that must be assembled and understood before they can begin the creative process of comprehensive land use planning.

"The Planning Process", Michael Chandler, *Planning Commissioners Journal*, Number 9, Burlington, March/April 1993. Briefly defines the Planning Process "as a systematic series of actions directed to some end." These are: 1. Planning as a Legal Process, 2. Planning as a Technical Process, 3. Planning as a Public Process and 4. Planning as a Management Process, with clear definitions of each process. Additionally, there are two other articles by Michael Chandler where a planning commission is used as the agency to manage the planning process. These are:

- "Developing the Comprehensive Plan – Part I", *Planning Commissioners Journal*, Burlington, Number 10 May/June 1993. Points out the importance of organizing the planning process, conducting background studies and establishing goals, objectives and strategies.
- "Developing the Comprehensive Plan – Part II", *Planning Commissioners Journal*, Burlington, Number 10 May/June 1993. Points out the importance of citizen participation and the gathering of community information such as the background studies essential to developing a comprehensive plan.

Preparing a Local Plan: A Guidebook, Georgia Department of Community Affairs. Presents a thumbnail sketch of minimum planning standards and procedures for the planning process, plan elements and data for planning.

“Planning made easy”, Toner, William; Gil, Efraim; et. al., *Planners Press*, American Planning Association, Chicago, 1994 - pages 1 through 11. Presents the idea that planning, done properly, will give results that will be enjoyed again and again by its beneficiaries. It describes a process for the planning effort and its Module 2 points out the need to be aware of the law – national and state – and the public interests to be served.

“The Small Town Planning Handbook, Chapter 1, Why Plan?”, Daniels, Thomas L.; Keller; John W., Lapping, Mark B., *Planners Press*, American Planning Association, Chicago, IL, 1988. Presents reasons not to plan as well as reasons to plan plus a good checklist to ascertain if you need a new plan.

INTERLIBRARY LOANS MATERIALS

The following on **community planning** can be borrowed via MnLINK.

- Lights, Camera, Community Video, Orten, Cabot; Spiegel; Keith; Gate, Eddie, American Planning Association, Chicago, 2001, 76 pages.
- Youth Participation in Community Planning, Mullahey, Ramona; Susskind, Yve; Checkoway, Beverly, American Planning Association, Chicago, 1999, 70 pages.
- Neighborhood-Based Planning, Martz, Wendelyn A., American Planning Association Planning Advisory Service, Chicago, 1995, 33 pages.
- The Small Town Planning Handbook, Daniels, Thomas L.; Keller, John W.; Lapping; Mark B., *Planners Press*, American Planning Association, Chicago, IL, 1988
- “Chapter 2, Getting Started”, Under Construction: Techniques and Tools for Local Planning, Minnesota Planning, 2002.

LEGAL NOTES

For Townships

Minnesota Statutes § 366.10 through § 366.18 convey to townships the authority to enact zoning regulations, zoning districts and establish zoning commissions and prescribes the manner in which this is to be done. Minnesota Statutes § 394.33 also conveys to townships the authority to plan and zone with the stipulation that any official controls, after adoption, must not be inconsistent nor less restrictive than any adopted official controls of the county within which it belongs. And Minnesota Statutes § 462.352 Definitions, and its subd. 2. Municipality defines "municipality" to mean any city, including a city operating under a home rule charter, and any town, thereby extending all of the authority granted to municipalities to plan per **Minnesota Statutes Chapter 462 Housing, Redevelopment, Planning, Zoning** to townships as well.

For Counties

Minnesota Statutes § 394.21 specifically grants to all counties, except those in the defined seven county metropolitan area, the authority to “carry on county planning and

zoning.” Minnesota Statutes § 394.23 gives county boards the power and authority to prepare and adopt by ordinance, a comprehensive plan and “a comprehensive plan or plans when adopted by ordinance must be the basis for official controls adopted under the provisions of sections 394.21 to 394.37.”

The seven metro counties are governed by **Minnesota Statutes Chapter 473, the Metropolitan Planning Act.**

For Municipalities

Minnesota Statutes § 462.353 grants municipalities their authority to plan. Subdivision 1. states, “A municipality may carry on comprehensive municipal planning activities for guiding the future development and improvement of the municipality and may prepare, adopt and amend a comprehensive municipal plan and implement such plan by ordinance and other official actions in accordance with the provisions of sections 462.351 to 462.364.”

For cities in the seven county metropolitan area, Minnesota Statutes § 473.858 Comprehensive Plans governs, to wit: “Within three years following the receipt of the metropolitan system statement, every local governmental unit shall have prepared a comprehensive plan in accordance with sections 462.355, subdivision 4, 473.175, and 473.851 to 473.871 and the applicable planning statute and shall have submitted the plan to the metropolitan council for review pursuant to section 473.175.” However, Minnesota Statutes § 462.355 initially grants these municipalities their basic authority to comprehensively plan.

Regional Planning and Joint Planning

Minnesota Statutes § 394.32 allows counties and their municipalities to jointly plan and also allows a municipality to contract with a county for its planning support.

For regional planning, Minnesota Statutes § 462.371 states “Any two or more counties, cities or towns may enter into an agreement under section 471.59 for the conduct of regional planning activities.”

Minnesota Statutes § 471.59 or the Joint Exercise of Powers Act is the vehicle whereby regional planning can be done, namely: “Two or more governmental units, by agreement entered into through action of their governing bodies, may jointly or cooperatively exercise any power common to the contracting parties or any similar powers, including those which are the same except for the territorial limits within which they may be exercised. The agreement may provide for the exercise of such powers by one or more of the participating governmental units on behalf of the other participating units.”

Except for the seven county metropolitan area, land use planning by cities, townships and counties is permissive or more directly stated, not mandated by Minnesota Statutes.

The **Local Planning Assistance Center at the Department of Administration** helps local governments with planning efforts, including comprehensive planning, zoning, hazard mitigation planning, GIS applications and development issues.

Upon request, this document will be made available in an alternate format, such as Braille, large print or audiotape. For TTY, contact Minnesota Relay Service at 800-627-3529 and ask for the Department of Administration.

Local Planning Assistance Center

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